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BELOW IS TEXT OF SENATOR FULBRIGHT'S FEBRUARY 5 STATEMENT
AT SENATE COMMITTEE HEARING:

THE STORY OF TRAN NGOC CHAU

IN THIS MORNING'S WASHINGTON POST, JOSEPH KRAFT TELLS US THE STORY OF TRAN NGOC CHAU. IT IS A STORY THAT DOES NOT REFLECT CREDIT ON THE UNITED STATES OR ON THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE REGIME OF PRESIDENT NGUYEN VAN THIEU. I HAVE KNOWN ABOUT THE STORY FOR SEVERAL MONTHS, AND I KNOW THAT THE FACTS THAT MR. KRAFT RECITES ARE ACCURATE. THERE ARE, OF COURSE, MANY OTHER FACTS THAT HAVE NOT BEEN REPORTED IN THE PRESS.

TO SET THE STORY IN CONTEXT, AS MR. KRAFT WRITES, CHAU IS AN OLD FRIEND OF PRESIDENT THIEU AND ONCE SHARED QUARTERS WITH HIM WHEN BOTH WERE JUNIOR OFFICERS. FROM 1960 TO 1966 HE WAS PROVINCE CHIEF IN KIEN HOA AND MAYOR OF DANANG. IN BOTH POSITIONS, HE HAD AN OUTSTANDING RECORD. IN 1966 HE WAS NOMINATED BY CIA TO BE HEAD OF THE CADRE TRAINING PROGRAM AT THE VUNGTAU TRAINING CENTER WHERE HE OBVIOUSLY WORKED CLOSELY WITH THE CIA AS THAT AGENCY HAD THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CENTER. IN THE 1967 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS, HE WAS ELECTED A DEPUTY FROM KIEN HOA WITH THE SECOND HIGHEST PLURALITY IN THE COUNTRY. HE THEN BECAME HEAD OF THE OPPOSITION BLOC AND WAS ELECTED SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE ASSEMBLY.

IN 1965, CHAU WAS CONTACTED BY HIS BROTHER, TRAN NGOC HIEN, A NORTH VIETNAMESE INTELLIGENCE AGENT. BY CHAU'S OWN ADMISSION, HE DID NOT REPORT THESE CONTACTS TO THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT. KRAFT SAYS THAT WHETHER HE REPORTED THESE CONTACTS TO THE CIA IS IN DISPUTE. CHAU SAYS THAT HE DID, AS KEYES BEECH REPORTED IN THE WASHINGTON EVENING STAR ON FEBRUARY 2. I KNOW FOR A FACT, FROM PRIVATE SOURCES, THAT HE DID REPORT HIS CONTACTS WITH HIS BROTHER TO A NUMBER OF U.S. OFFICIALS IN VIETNAM, INCLUDING CIA OFFICERS WITH WHOM HE HAD DAILY CONTACT. I SHOULD ADD THAT I ALSO KNOW FOR A FACT THAT HE

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HAD, AND STILL HAS, MANY CLOSE FRIENDS IN THE AMERICAN OFFICIAL COMMUNITY.

AT ANY RATE, TO RETURN TO THE STORY TOLD BY MR. KRAFT, CHAU BEGAN LAST YEAR TO ADVOCATE A CEASE-FIRE AND DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT AND THE NLF. HE ALSO BEGAN TO ATTACK NGUYEN CAO THANG, A RICH SAIGON PHARMACIST AND MEMBER OF PRESIDENT THIEU'S INNER CLIQUE, WHO IS DESCRIBED BY KRAFT AS PRESIDENT THIEU'S "POLITICAL BAG MAN." CHAU'S BROTHER WAS ARRESTED IN APRIL AND INTERROGATED IN JULY. NO CHARGES WERE LODGED AGAINST CHAU AT THE TIME OF HIS BROTHER'S ARREST AND INTERROGATION. I AM TOLD, IN FACT, THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN CHAU AND THIEU WERE NOT BROKEN UNTIL SOME WEEKS OR MONTHS THEREAFTER. IT APPEARS THAT THIEU'S OPEN ATTACKS ON CHAU BEGAN ONLY AFTER CHAU DENOUNCED THE PHARMACIST THANG.

THUS IT APPEARS THAT THE REAL REASON FOR THIEU'S ATTACK ON CHAU WAS NOT HIS CONTACT WITH THE COMMUNISTS BUT RATHER CHAU'S GROWING POWER AS AN OPPOSITION FIGURE AND AS A CRITIC OF THIEU'S ATTEMPTS TO PRESSURE AND CORRUPT THE ASSEMBLY AS EVIDENCED BY THE ACTIVITIES OF THANG.

THIEU BEGAN HIS CAMPAIGN AGAINST CHAU BY DENOUNCING HIM PUBLICLY ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS. ACCORDING TO THE SAIGON PRESS, IN A SPEECH ON DECEMBER 10 AT THE VUNGTAU TRAINING CENTER, THIEU SAID THAT IF THE ASSEMBLY WOULD NOT SEE JUSTICE DONE TO CHAU, AND TO TWO OTHER ACCUSED DEPUTIES, "THE PEOPLE IN THE ARMED FORCES WILL CUT OFF THE HEADS OF THESE DEPUTIES" AND HE ADDED: "OUR DUTY IS TO BEAT SUCH DOGS TO DEATH." THIEU ORGANIZED DEMONSTRATIONS, INCLUDING A MARCH ON PARLIAMENT, IN CONNECTION WITH HIS EFFORTS TO LIFT CHAU'S PARLIAMENTARY IMMUNITY. FAILING TO SECURE THE VOTES OF THREE-QUARTERS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY NECESSARY TO LIFT CHAU'S IMMUNITY, THIEU RESORTED TO THE LEGALLY QUESTIONABLY TACTIC OF HAVING A PETITION LIFTING CHAU'S IMMUNITY CIRCULATED AMONG ASSEMBLY MEMBERS. ACCORDING TO A REPORT IN THIS MORNING'S WASHINGTON POST BY ROBERT KAISER FROM SAIGON, THE 102 NECESSARY SIGNATURES ON THE PETITION HAVE NOW BEEN OBTAINED, AND PRESIDENT THIEU IS FREE TO PROSECUTE CHAU.

I KNOW THAT THE U.S. MISSION IN SAIGON DID NOT EXPECT THIEU TO OBTAIN THE NECESSARY NUMBER OF VOTES TO LIFT CHAU'S IMMUNITY. BUT THEY OBVIOUSLY UNDER-ESTIMATED THIEU'S DETERMINATION AND HIS ABILITY TO OBTAIN THE RESULT HE DESIRES THROUGH THREATS AND BRIBERY. I HAVE VERY PERSUASIVE EVIDENCE ON THIS POINT. MR. KRAFT TELLS US THAT AMBASSADOR BUNKER WAS DIRECTED TO INTERVENE WITH PRESIDENT THIEU ON CHAU'S BEHALF BUT THAT "THE EMBASSY HAS NOT BESTIRRED ITSELF."

GIVEN THE ATTITUDE
CHAU, AND THEIR UNWILLINGNESS TO INCUR PRESIDENT THIEU'S
DISPLEASURE, I AM NOT SURPRISED. NOR AM I SURPRISED THAT
CHAU IS DESENCHANTED WITH AMERICANS BECAUSE OF THEIR REFUSAL
IN INTERVENE, AS KEYES BEECH REPORTED AFTER HIS INTERVIEW
WITH CHAU.

CHAU IS NOW IN HIDING. I HOPE FOR HIS SAKE THAT HE WILL
BE ABLE TO ESCAPE THIEU'S PERSECUTION. BUT EVEN IF HE DOES,
THE STORY OF TRAN NGOC CHAU WILL NOT HAVE A HAPPY ENDING.
THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE ASSEMBLY HAS BEEN INTIMIDATED, WHILE
THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAS SHRUGGED ITS SHOULDERS. AND THOSE
IN VIETNAM WHO FAVOR NEGOTIATION AND COMPROMISE, OR WHO
DISPUTE PRESIDENT THIEU, WILL SPEAK AT THEIR PERIL FROM NOW
ON. PERHAPS THE STORY OF TRAN NGOC CHAU WILL PROVE TO BE
THE LAST CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT
IN VIETNAM.

ROGERS

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